MONTEREY NEWS

December 2013
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The Town

by Susan Gallant

Special Town Meeting Dec. 6

Select Board meetings in November were mostly taken up with discussions about the content of the upcoming special town meeting, to be held on December 6 at 7 p.m. at the Monterey Firehouse.

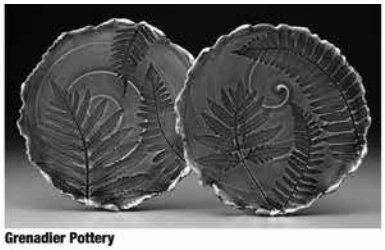
The warrant for the special town meeting has been mailed and can also be found on the town's website, www.montereyma.gov/Public_Documents/MontereyMA_Warrant/index. Most of this warrant focuses on drainage easements necessary for the repairs and improvements that need to be made to Route 23 (Article 1) and on amending the bylaws to include solar photovoltaic systems (Articles 6 and 7).

Other topics to be decided on include updating the 1994 bylaw that provides retired firefighters with a real estate tax abatement (Article 2) and authorizing the transfer of $2,800 from free cash to the Council on Aging (Article 3). Article 4 is to authorize the Library Trustees to proceed with a feasibility study to examine options for expansion and renovation of the current building or construction of a new library facility, and Article 5 is to authorize the Trustees to apply for, accept, and expend any state-funded grants for such planning and design projects. Article 8 is to adopt a temporary moratorium (until the town meeting in May 2015) on the use of land or structures in Monterey for medical marijuana treatment centers to allow to town enough time to consider the issues, including a possible new bylaw.

Special Honor for a Special Guy

Last July, former Great Barrington fire chief and Tryon Construction employee, Michael Ordyna, came to the rescue of a woman who hit her head and fell into Lake Buel. On November 18, thanks to the diligent efforts of police sergeant Michael Johnson, the Town of Monterey officially honored Michael Ordyna with a citation and medal for his bravery, presented to him by the Monterey Select Board and witnessed by family, friends, and members of Monterey's fire and police departments.

After the presentation, Mr. Ordyna, who was visibly moved by all the fuss, talked about his training and said that he was thankful to be able to help someone in trouble. But in the end, he simply chalked it up to fate, modestly saying, "I just happened to be in the right place at the right time."


Grenadier Pottery

Wendy G. Jensen

Nicole Campanale

Kit Patten

The Knolls

Linda Skipper

Joe Baker

These and other items made by Monterey artists and artisans can be seen (and purchased) during the 5th Annual Monterey Makers Studio Tour on Saturday, December 7. Maps to the studios can be picked up at the General Store and Roadside Café or downloaded at www.MontereyMACC.org. *(See article p. 9.)*

School Survey

For a while now, the Select Board and other interested parties have been discussing the state of the building that houses the Monterey School and the options to address its myriad problems. Repairing the building would require that it meet all of the guidelines spelled out in the Americans with Disabilities Act, and because the building sits up on a hill on a small lot, that would be virtually impossible and exceedingly costly. The options, as they stand now, are to build anew or to close the school and bus the children to New Marlborough.

But before any decisions are made or any money is spent, Select Board member Scott Jenssen thought it wise to determine how the residents of Monterey feel about the possibility of such a significant change to our town. To that end, Scott, with the input of his fellow board members and the help of Executive Secretary Melissa Noe, created a survey to gauge townspeople's sentiment on these issues. If you haven't received an email guiding you to the survey, you can find a link to it on the home page of the town's website (montereyma.gov). Hard copies are also available at town hall. The Select Board urges you to carefully consider the impact a school, or the lack thereof, will have on the town, and then fill out the survey to weigh in. (See related article, p. 5.)

Senior Citizens Holiday Gathering

Muriel Lazzarini, Select Board chair, received a notice about the annual luncheon for senior citizens, held at Mount Everett High School. This year, the luncheon will take place at noon on Thursday, December 5. If the weather is bad, the event will be held the following day, at the same time. The high school's culinary students will be preparing the meal, and students in the drama and music departments will provide the entertainment.

Police Report

On November 25, Gareth Backhaus, Monterey's chief of police, reported on the following activity from his department:

- Lockout on Deerwood Circle
- Mutual aid call in New Marlborough
- Trees fallen across Main, Hupi, and Tyringham Roads
- False alarm on Hupi Road
- Lockout at the post office
- Reading glasses lost at General Store; if found, please call the police department
- Neighbor complaint on Beartown Mountain Rd.
- Tree fallen on wires on Tyringham Rd.
- Environmental police were called in response to a report of an owl sitting on the side of Pixley Rd. When the police arrived, the bird was sufficiently startled and flew away.
- False alarm on Woodland Ave.
- Disabled motor vehicle on Pixley Rd.

And in other news . . .

Maynard Forbes, director of the highway department, reports that the dam behind the library, which Hurricane Irene damaged, will be repaired once the necessary equipment and materials arrive. Also, the drawdown of Lake Garfield has gone smoothly, with the exception of one beaver that was trapped near Brewer Pond and removed.

And just when everyone thought the septic-system loan program was dead and buried, it opened its gaping maw and demanded another $5,000. Attempts to pay off the remainder of the loan in one fell swoop were thwarted by the commonwealth. According to the powers that be at the state house, the loan program must run its term, which will end in 2019, when the last of the yearly $5,000 payments will be made.

Town Accountant Brendan Fletcher reported that he and Town Treasurer Bethany Mielke are working to locate a discrepancy so that the FY 2013 books can be reconciled.

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Jim Bracken to Read at Dec. 18th Community Potluck

The showing of Larry Silk's documentary drew a large crowd at the November Potluck. The film was very moving and the discussion afterward illuminating. Many thanks to Larry and also to Joe Baker for the logistics of the projector.

For the December Potluck, we have local author and storyteller Jim Bracken, who will read his story "Spaghetti with Beans," a true story of his dominating Irish grandmother, resistive father, mother, and the city neighborhood in which they sparred in 1948. "Spaghetti with Beans" was an award-winning entry in Berkshire Theater Group's "Made in the Berkshires" Festival 2013. Jim Bracken lives on Laurel Banks Lane on Lake Buel in Monterey. His numerous memoirs and fictional stories, written over fifty years, were created as gifts, tributes, and occasionally eulogies for relatives and friends.

The next Monterey Community Potluck Dinner will be held at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, December 18, in The Fellowship Hall of the Monterey Meetinghouse. Please bring a dish to share with a serving utensil and a place setting and silverware for yourself. Everyone is welcome.

—Barbara Dahlman & Kyle Pierce

Julie Shapiro

George Emmons talking about his art at the November 9 opening of his show in the Knox Gallery at the Monterey Library.

"In the Details" at Knox Gallery

We look forward to a diverse and interesting exhibit of very small works at the Knox Gallery/Monterey Library in December. *In the Details* will open on December 6, the evening before the Monterey Makers Studio Tour. A festive reception for the artists and community from 5:30 to 7 p.m., where information will be available to guide your Saturday morning tour around Monterey Makers' locations. [Note: The reception will start at 5:30, a half hour earlier than previously stated, due to the Town Meeting at 7pm that evening.]

The Knox Gallery aims to spotlight the work of local artists, who come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. *In the Details* exemplifies our broad array of contributors, including several artists who have not previously participated in our group shows. Moreover, while the work of Monterey artists predominates, we have reached out to our neighbors, and work by artists from several surrounding communities in Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York are represented. Diversity is also evidenced in the type of work shown—while small scale creates commonality, the exhibit features all sorts of materials: sculpture, painting, prints, multimedia, and everything in between.

In the Details can be viewed during library hours through February 1, 2014.

The Knox Gallery will also be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on December 7 during the Monterey Makers Studio Tour.

—MaryPaul Yates

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WiredWest High-Sped Internet Service Update

The prospects for providing residents and businesses in western Massachusetts with high-speed Internet and other broadband services were significantly enhanced this spring when Governor Deval Patrick filed an IT bond bill with the state legislature that included $40 million for last-mile broadband infrastructure. The funds are to be administered by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), which is completing a middle-mile broadband network to serve community anchor institutions in western and central Massachusetts and to provide interconnection points for a future last-mile network. While the bond funds are only part of what is required to implement the last mile, a project estimated at $100 million, they can be leveraged to acquire the balance of the funding.

In response to this development, WiredWest is focusing our strategy on four key areas:

1) supporting the passage of the IT bond bill

2) partnering with MBI on developing the last-mile network

3) seeking the additional funds needed for its construction and operation

4) working closely with our member towns to assure local participation in the project

In support of this strategy, in September the WiredWest Board of Directors agreed unanimously that we retain David Epstein on a contingent-fee basis as Executive Director of WiredWest, reporting to the Executive Committee. David is a seasoned telecommunications executive who has worked with MBI and has an excellent relationship with its director, Judy Dumont. There is more about David's background at our website www.wiredwest.net.

IT Bond Bill: Members of the WiredWest Executive Committee testified in support of the bill, H.3330, before the Joint Committee on Regulatory Oversight on June 11 and before the House Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets on September 18, at which time they also submitted about three hundred letters in support of the legislation from citizens, businesses, Select Boards, and other organizations in our towns. Both committees reported the bill out favorably.

MBI Partnership: Because of MBI's invaluable experience with building the middle mile and its expected role in administering the bond-bill funds, WiredWest recognizes that it is vital that we work with MBI on the last mile. David and members of the Executive Committee met on September 13 with Judy Dumont and Maeghan Silverberg Welford, Chief of Staff for the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, parent organization of MBI. We discussed a PowerPoint presentation prepared under David's lead outlining how MBI and WiredWest could partner on the last-mile project. While no formal commitments were made by MBI or MTC, our presentation was well received. Since then David has continued to interface with Judy on an ongoing basis, and regularly attends our Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings.

Funding: The most likely source for most (but not all) of the remaining funding is the low-cost Broadband Loan Program of the Rural Utilities Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. As a cooperative of forty-two rural towns, WiredWest believes we are the most appropriate entity to apply for those funds. The Executive Committee has developed a detailed project plan for completing the complex RUS application, and individual members of the committee have begun work on their assignments under that plan. We anticipate requesting for some grant funds from MBI to procure certain engineering and market research services required by the application.

Additionally, under David's direction WiredWest is exploring how we might attract capital from the private sector. Both the bond bill and RUS funds must be used for construction, but not operation, of the network. A private-sector partner potentially could provide those funds by connecting customers to the last mile and delivering services to them. Likewise, we are evaluating how we might utilize our authority under state law as a Municipal Lighting Plant Cooperative to issue bonds and preliminarily discussing what financial stake, if any, our member towns may have in the project.

Town Participation: WiredWest is the entity designated by our member towns to bring broadband to their citizens and businesses. We continue working with our members to assure that, through WiredWest, their voice is heard in deliberations about the last-mile project and they play a substantive role in the development and operation of the network.

We will keep you posted on the developments over the next few months, which we expect to be significant and which should give us a more definite time frame for delivering service to Monterey.

—Monica Webb
WiredWest Delegate, Monterey

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Important Notice Concerning Brush Burning Season in Monterey

Beginning on January 15, 2014, permits for burning brush will be available online. Permits can be requested from 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. daily if burning is allowed that day. *No permits* will be issued after 1:00 p.m. You will be able to print your permit for that day and it must be kept on site while burning. If you are unable to access the system online a phone number will be provided for you to apply. More details and the web address will be in the January *Monterey News* and on the Town website, www.montereyma.gov.

—Maynard Forbes,
Monterey Fire Department

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Help needed a few hours weekly: Shovel snow, carry in firewood, etc.; call Carol, 413-528-4135.

The *Monterey News* will run this column, which we hope will help people make beneficial connections, when there is a need. Do you have a need that someone else might help you with? Do you have a service to offer that you think would be of assistance to someone else? If so, please send them to the editor, montereynews9@gmail.com, and it will be printed in the next month's edition.

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Please Take Survey on Monterey School

The Monterey Select Board has been considering the options for housing the Southern Berkshire Regional School District program here in town. We started with three possibilities:

• Refurbishing the present Monterey school building,

• Building a new structure at a different location, or

• Abandoning the program entirely and busing our young children to New Marlborough Central School.

Unfortunately the current school building, which is 136 years old, is not a feasible option because it would not only require extensive renovations, but would also need to be made handicap accessible. This last requirement is not possible because of the topography of the very small and steep site.

We are left with two options and are asking your input. We feel that a new structure at a different location would be the best long-term solution for us as we strongly support the idea of a community school in Monterey. We could have a building that would accommodate up to three classes, which in itself would increase the student population of the school. It, of course, would be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, would offer flexibility for the teachers within the classroom walls, and could have all the updated technology available as well as an appropriate playground area for the children and adequate parking.

The last option would be to abandon the early childhood program in Monterey and bus the children to the New Marlborough Central School.

We are at a major crossroads and it is important that we hear from as many registered voters as possible. We hope that you will take the time to firstly think about this very carefully and then to fill out the survey. We also encourage you to come in to a Select Board meeting to share your thoughts and ideas. Please go to http://www.montereyma.gov/Public_Documents/MontereyMA_BBoard/I01C1C0FD and click where indicated to take the survey. Hard copies of the survey will also be available at the Town Hall.

—Monterey Select Board
Muriel Lazzarini, Chair;
Wayne Burkhart, Scott Jenssen

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Taxpayers' Corner
The Monterey School

Monterey has a one-room schoolhouse that has been the heart and pride of this town for many decades. Countless residents have begun their schooling under the tutelage of a handful of remarkable teachers, and the school's unique program has been part of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District since the district's inception in 1953.

The district, unfortunately, has had an ambivalent attitude toward the Monterey school ever since the Sheffield campus was constructed in the early 1990s. Even at its peak, when it was regularly filled to capacity, there were calls, year after year, to close the Monterey school. It was also systematically neglected, starved of the funds needed to keep it in good shape, and consequently it began to fall into disrepair, despite repeated calls by Monterey officials to spend the dollars necessary for its continued operation.

In 2008, frustrated by the partisanship of an appointed School Committee, the five district towns voted to change the method of selecting School Committee members to an elective process. This resulted in an opportunity to revisit the Regional Agreement, which was amended in 2009 and restated in 2011 in order to provide a more democratic process for the opening and closing of schools, and to provide a more equitable apportionment method for bond payments.

The restatement of the Agreement had critical implications for Monterey taxpayers and for our school. First, Monterey gave up its exclusive right to decide for itself the fate of its school. Formerly, a district school could not be closed without the consent of its town. The restated Agreement required, instead, only a vote of four out of the five district towns to close a school. In return, Monterey gained a critical advantage in the method of apportioning capital bonds. Whereas formerly the formula was based on the Equalized Value (EQV), it is now based on the statutory method.

To illustrate the importance of this change, look no further than the bond payments for the construction of the Sheffield campus. Of the $30 million spent on this project (interest included), Monterey taxpayers paid over $7 million. That's about 23% of the total project cost, covered by a town that represented, on average, only 11% of the student population. (And during those twenty years of bond payments, the district threw the absolute minimum amount of capital dollars at our little schoolhouse, if it gave us any at all.) The new apportionment method we now use, however, assesses Monterey for approximately 11% of a bond, providing an enormous cost savings to the town on debt payments.

In 2011, attempting to remedy the disrepair of all three outlying schools, the School Committee proposed a debt authorization to borrow up to $3 million. (This borrowing also included technology and infrastructure improvements to the Sheffield campus.) It passed in Monterey, Alford, and Egremont. It failed in New Marlborough and Sheffield. A second attempt was made with half the amount, but that also failed.

The following fiscal year, frustrated by the School Committee's inability to find support for the outlying schools, the administration proposed an FY13 budget with the outlying schools closed. The School Committee rejected the proposal.

So the district was once again left in limbo. The outlying schools remained open, but Sheffield and New Marlborough refused to pay for their upkeep.

The School Committee then created an Elementary Task Force to look into the matter. The Task Force's report was published on December 13, 2012, and—astonishingly and apparently in complete ignorance of the Regional Agreement—proposed that a) "the towns of Egremont and Monterey will cover all capital costs of either building or renovating their

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schools," and b) "New Marlborough Central School will be renovated . . . at the expense of the district."

What the Task Force members were ignorant of was the following part of the Regional Agreement: "The District shall provide suitable school facilities for students of all the Member Towns and shall assume all expenses of operation and maintenance of such schools."

Read it again, folks, and read it carefully. *It remains the district's obligation to finance the outlying schools.*

Beneath the Task Force's ignorance of the Agreement was a more discouraging message. Instead of proposing an inclusive, district-wide solution, the Task Force did what the district has always done by recommending a disrespectful, divisive plan that pitted town against town, cherry picked winners and losers, and disregarded the financial consequences, which would fall heavily and unjustifiably on the towns of Egremont and Monterey.

The Task Force's misinformed attitude spread further early this year, as its recommendations were passed on to the School Committee. In an article in the March 22–28 edition of the *Berkshire Record*, "SBRSD adopts $14M budget," the final paragraph read: "The three outlying elementary schools will not have significant capital investment by the district at large, because the School Committee determined that the buildings belong to the respective towns, and should therefore be maintained by the towns."

Incredibly, this shows that the School Committee and the administration also appear ignorant of the Regional Agreement, which does not discriminate on the basis of building ownership. The district is responsible for the upkeep of all school facilities. Period.

As summer turned to fall, there appeared to be no stopping the "magical thinking" displayed by otherwise dedicated individuals and committees. According to the November *Monterey News*, David Hastings, the newly appointed district superintendent, "unexpectedly dropped in on the October 7 Select Board meeting" to discuss the Monterey school, and "The board assured the superintendent that funding for the school would be coming from within the town."

This statement seemed so outrageous—that the Select Board would promise on behalf of Monterey taxpayers that an enormous financial giveaway was already "assured" before those taxpayers even had a chance to consider it, let alone vote on it at town meeting—that I checked the Select Board minutes for that meeting, which state, a little more soberly, that "The board intends to request the funds from the Monterey citizenry."

So it seems even our Select Board is practicing its own form of magical thinking, in which the hard-won restatement of the Regional Agreement is forgotten, and instead of standing our ground, we surrender the advantages we have gained by showing our hand in this high-stakes poker game before the betting has even begun.

What I would like Monterey residents to consider is this: why does the Task Force, the School Committee, the administration, and even the Monterey Select Board, each in its own turn, seem intent on proceeding to pressure Monterey taxpayers into picking up an enormous tab in order to avoid . . .what?

The implicit threat, of course, is that if Monterey does not disregard the Agreement and volunteer to build a school, the School Committee will try to terminate the program.

But—putting aside the question of the real motive for officials turning a blind eye to the Regional Agreement, let's ask the essential question: should Monterey pay for and build a new school at its own expense? The answer is a resounding no, and here's why:

1) Does anyone in this town really believe it's fair that Monterey should continue to pay for the upkeep and improvement of the Sheffield campus and the New Marlborough school, and at the same time pay the entire cost of its own little schoolhouse?

2) The $3 million bond failed in 2011 because Sheffield and New Marlborough

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didn't want to contribute to the cost of maintaining the Monterey and Egremont schools, and especially because the more equitable apportionment method of the restated Agreement shifted much of that debt cost onto those larger towns. But if Monterey "voluntarily" pays for a new school, the School Committee is relieved of resolving this contentious issue. Thank you, Monterey taxpayers, for avoiding another conflict and possible shutdown of the district, as happened in the recent past. You just paid to make the problem go away by making it your problem. However . . .

3) The Monterey school program *can be shut down anytime* by a four-fifths majority vote of towns. So Monterey could spend $500,000 to $1 million building a new school, and in two years the program could close, leaving the town with an expensive property—this in a village that already has unused and underutilized properties. The town should not be in the business of real estate speculation. One need only look at what has been happening in other towns saddled with unsalable properties to know better.

4) More broadly speaking, what exactly is the district's strategic plan? Has anyone read the newspapers lately? The Town of Great Barrington resoundingly defeated the $56 million high school renovation, and the towns of Lee and Lenox have been heavily invested in querying their constituents about regionalization. Current enrollment is down in both towns: 722 in Lee, and 753 in Lenox. Pittsfield has also seen a "significant" enrollment drop this year of 156 students. SBRSD enrollment is now 776, and continues to fall every year. In such a precarious environment, why is the School Committee stuck in a backward, reactionary, short-term planning mode? What the district needs is a proactive and imaginative strategic plan that envisions our future ten years from now, rather than simply pushing unpalatable costs onto little towns or budget-slashing at anything that moves.

5) Finally, closing the outlying schools and beating a hasty retreat to the Sheffield campus will do little in the way of long-term savings (operating the Monterey school costs less than 1% of the budget), and may, in fact, hasten the demise of the district. It will reduce enrollment further because the Sheffield campus is geographically located at a disadvantage, stuck in the southwest corner of South County against the borders of New York and Connecticut, and so more of our students will choice out. SBRSD will become increasingly isolated and vulnerable and might find itself, in a few short years, down to 500 students with 1,000 empty seats—the Sheffield campus was built for a capacity of 1,500—where there may be nowhere else to go except into extinction.

It is this dim prospect of unsustainability that seems worth our attention now, before the future is upon us and all other options foreclosed, and not who should pay for a new Monterey school.

If that proposal should come up for a vote at town meeting next May, we should vote it down. We will be helping the School Committee find its proper focus.

—Jonathan Sylbert

Community Center News

We're still basking in the glow of Octoberfest on October 12—thanks again to all of you who came out to attend and to those who helped us put on the event. Plans are already afoot for next year's version! At last the figures seem to all be in, and our happy report is that we cleared over $1,000 toward our building fund.

The latest bid forms are out to contractors, with a deadline of December 5, so we are hoping that the next construction work will begin in mid-December. Chilly time for work with stones and large pieces of wood, but the builders don't blink an eye at getting things accomplished no matter the conditions.

Exciting news came from the Massachusetts Cultural Council just recently: they will be accepting another round of grant applications in the coming months (deadline and details still to be announced) for Capital Improvements—that's us! We applied for such a grant from them in 2012 and feel that our progress since then will produce a positive response this time.

Keep your eye on the doings at the house at 468 Main Road, and we will keep you posted at our website, www.ccmonterey.org, where you can always make an online tax-deductible donation.

Thanks for all your help.

—Friends of Wilson McLaughlin House

Monterey Library Notes

A special thanks to Christine Fahlund for finding the postcard used in last month's notes and donating it to the library.

Thanks also to the Friends of the Library as they have done so much to help this library become a special place for everyone in Monterey. We recently were able to put in our catalog two backpacks that the Friends put together and are allowed to be checked out. One contains booklets about nature as well as binoculars, note pad, and pencils. Perfect for bringing a child out into the woods and observing something they won't see on the iPad. The other has some art supplies—perfect for those to check out who have younger children visiting over the holidays and don't have those items handy to keep the kids busy. We welcome suggestions for other themes for backpacks. The Friends have done so much this year to make the library friendly for children. It pains me to hear from older people their bad experience as a child in the library, so we are trying hard to make sure the younger generations of this town feel welcome here and to learn by experience how valuable libraries are to society.

A fiber update for the library is in order. CWMARS has switched their connection over to fiber optic, so we have limited access already on one public computer to real high-speed internet. We are in the midst right now of working out with the town's Internet service provider to get our other public computers and our free available 24/7 wireless network on the fiber as well. Download speeds are faster than DSL, but the upload speeds are truly amazing. Watch for the sandwich board on the lawn to know when you should come in and see what we have been missing!

—Mark Makuc, Library Director

Monterey Makers Studio Tour December 7

It's our FIFTH annual *Monterey Makers Studio Tour*, and it promises to be extra special. The Monterey Cultural Council once again invites you to visit the studios and workshops of multiple Monterey artists and artisans. The entire day is devoted to giving you an up-close view of their talents, tools, and work. Find lots of seasonal spirit and gifts.

Who: Monterey Artists and Artisans

What: Open doors all day for your visit; spend time with your favorite local artists; find unique seasonal gifts.

Where: Tour throughout, Monterey,

When: Saturday, December 7, 2013, 10 a.m. – 4p.m.

How: Start from the Monterey General Store or Roadside Café, both on Route 23, our "Main Street"; pick up your map and follow it to the places and artists you've been waiting to visit. Try to get to all of them. This is certain to be a rewarding "treasure hunt."

What: A warm welcome, filled with seasonal spirit and treasures for those on your gift list, or even yourself.

As of press time, these splendid studios, artists, and artisans are included:

- Ellen Grenadier, with her beautiful functional pottery
- Fiona De Ris, Roadside Cafe delicious edibles
- Joe Baker, the popular artist with beautiful paintings and pastels
- Julie Neu, creative quilter and fabric artist
- Julie Shapiro, with striking, important abstract paintings and prints
- Leonard Weber, ubiquitous townscapes
- Melissa Preston, Honey Hill Llamas: sweet llamas, yarn, and honey
- Michael & Maureen Banner, silversmiths
- Michael Erkkinen, timber framer
- Nicole Campanale, sophisticated handmade bow ties
- Kit Patten, nifty artist and sculptor
- Phil and Sue Knoll, fantastic artists
- Roger Tryon, sweet maple products
- Susan Sellew/Rawson Brook Farm: famous goat cheese
- Wendy G. Jensen, handwoven baskets
- Gould Farm Harvest Barn: deliciousness
- Monterey Store: venerable and beautiful

Specials additions to this year's Monterey Makers Studio Tour include:

Preview of some of the Monterey arts and crafts will be featured at Knox Gallery, Monterey Library, Friday, Dec 6, 5–8 p.m.

Closing Tea for all our friends, visitors, and participating artists at Roadside Café, sponsored by Gould Farm and the Monterey Cultural Council's indefatigable, Fiona DeRis.

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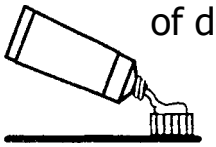

528-6520

Route 23 Monterey

Who's Who in Monterey
Lynn Leavitt

Lynn Leavitt is short in stature but not in substance (though, to be fair, this reporter is quite tall). On offer the morning she and I met were tea, banana bread, a gorgeous view out her front window, and a life story that I could have listened to for hours longer than the two she gave me, had I not been so worn out. Lynne is tough to keep up with. So, stay with me people. This one's gonna move.

A "weekender" since 1987 and full time in Monterey since 2006, Lynne, along with her husband, Aaron, has been here nearly as long as she's ever been settled any place. Prior to this, she lived in the Springfield area, where she was born but which she left as a child when her father, a psychiatrist, enlisted in the Navy and received orders the day after the attacks on Pearl Harbor to report for duty in Newport, Rhode Island.

After this, her family—father, mother, younger sister Mickey, and herself—would be moved to New London, Connecticut, then to Chicago, then to Yosemite. But when her father was ordered to Hawaii, which was not then a part of the United States, Lynne's mother would return to Springfield with the girls—a saddening necessity for Lynne's mother, but a thrilling prospect for Lynne. Particularly after the urban extreme of Chicago and the rural extreme of Yosemite, not to mention the annual change of schools for

Liz Goodman

an adolescent girl, Lynne looked forward to being home and settled.

The timing couldn't have been better. In high school, Lynne met Aaron, whose life would follow a similar trajectory as Lynne's father's—a psychiatrist who would enlist in the Navy during wartime (for him, Vietnam), and who would have Lynne back on the move, though now as a young adult.

She did manage to squeeze college in, at Smith. Here she excelled at dance, even winning an arts award whose other winner that year was Sylvia Plath. She was also president of her house, and a bride-to-be. This trio of involvements had her in the familiar position of taking on almost-too-much. And so it's little surprise that her dedication to the school continues to this day, cochairing her sixty-fifth reunion committee and supporting the School of Social Work, in honor of her mother, a graduate of the school whom Lynne holds in high esteem and remembers with great affection.

Her name was Lucille Stein and, born in Malden, Massachusetts, she was the daughter of immigrants from Lithuania. She pursued music as a child and into young adulthood, even attending the New England Conservatory. However, though she earned some money playing the organ along with silent movies and teaching piano, her father urged her to pursue more reliable work. So, she became a social worker, and a most effective one at that. The head of Jewish Family Services in Springfield at the end of the war, she was tasked with settling Holocaust survivors in Springfield, something she apparently managed to do with warmth and grace. Lynne remembers a trip to the seamstress in Springfield many years after this, when she recognized that the woman working on her garment was a survivor. "Did you know my mother, Lucille Stein?" she asked the seamstress, who was on bent knee. The woman, rising, was moved to tears. "You Mrs. Stein's daughter? She saved my life," she said.

Different in degree but not in kind, Lucille was such a mother as well. Ever finding herself in new settings under strained circumstances, she raised her daughters resourcefully and with confidence. Lynne remembers living in cramped quarters in Chicago—rented rooms in the home of a stingy woman who disallowed even the girls having friends over to play. When it came time to celebrate Lynne's birthday, Lucille arranged to have her party at a nearby skating pond. Other girls Lynne knew then had big homes in which to host their parties, but the skating party—a novelty, an adventure—was the one everyone would talk about, on and on.

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Lynne, I imagine, modeled her own mothering after this. Certainly their circumstances were similar. Lynne's four children were born in three different places and spent their early years ever in transition. Mark was born in Chicago when Aaron was in medical school. Robert was born at Springfield Hospital when Aaron was a resident there, as was Joyce, though Lynne and Aaron were living in Stockbridge, Aaron a fellow at the Austen Riggs Center in Stockbridge. And Peter was born in Bainbridge, Maryland, when Aaron was in the Navy.

Once the kids were school-aged, Lynne got involved in the schools as well, starting with bringing in music and arts enrichment programs, but then getting herself elected to the School Committee, the second woman ever so to serve in Springfield.

Also, for five years Lynne taught fifth grade. But when she was about forty, she wanted a change. So, she took a job with Sears as their decorator. As such, she performed house calls to potential clients looking for new slipcovers or drapes, arriving with swatches of fabric samples and her tape measure. She did this for six months before realizing she wanted to become a professional interior designer.

The Department of Design at U. Mass. enabled this, yet amounted also to a change not only of career but also of attitude. Lynne remembers the world of education as encouraging, but the world of art and design as critical and so intimidating. Yet, unsurprisingly, she rose to the challenge. Her favorite class was the most competitive one, graphic arts, whose teacher had such high standards that she remembers them to this day. The workload also centered on actual projects that businesses would hire the students to take on, with the promise of a cash prize for the best work. In one instance, designing a poster for a graphic arts store, Lynne was the winner. Fifty dollars!

It took her five years of being a part-time student (and a mother of four growing children) to earn her B.F.A., working for an established office supply business for thirteen years before striking out on her own.

Years passed, and when the time came for Lynne and Aaron to retire, they decided to do so in Monterey. They now live on Lake Garfield in what had once been a summer cottage, but is now a well-designed (of course!) home often noisy with their children and grandchildren, and their one great-grandchild, but more often calm with just the two of them and their black lab, named Brady, a therapy dog at Fairview Hospital.

Lynne is out and about a lot too—as a member of Hevreh where, at seventy-five years old, she became a bat mitzvah; as a singer in several choirs; as a recently retired member of the Monterey Cultural Council and current member of the Monterey Land Trust; and so on.

I recently heard a phrase that comes to mind in regard to Lynne: she makes her own weather. What's more, I imagine the weather she makes is most often as it was when she and I sat for this interview—sunny and clear, bright and crisp.

If this is weather you tend to enjoy, you might want to seek Lynne out.

—Liz Goodman

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"Garden Gustation"

What's cooking from Monterey Gardens and Farms

The Apple Acquisition

I think I have some hoarding tendencies, mostly when it comes to food in season. This was the year for hoarding, particularly the apples. We had our first harvest from our own Blushing Golden and Ida Red trees this year. It was a meager harvest but exciting nonetheless! It's really hard for me to see apple trees in our area laden with fruit and no one making good use of them. However, sometimes the tasty pomes are offered up for others to help themselves. We had the good fortune of being able to pick apples from a couple of friend's trees this year. And even though we really had plenty, I couldn't pass up the free box of apples on Route 23 as I was heading home one day. What a year!

We've made and canned lots of applesauce, something we can never have too much of. Our friends Kit and Connie let us use their cider press, and we pressed a couple of gallons of amazingly sweet and tasty apple juice, cider, to drink and to freeze. We also tried a new (to us) preserving method of boiling some of the cider down, much like you would for maple syrup, to make cider syrup. Although we haven't tried it yet (it keeps in the refrigerator), we are hopeful that we will be able to add this syrup to some hot water this winter for a steamy cup of reconstituted hot cider. And thanks to tips

Wendy Jensen

(and treats) from our friend Bonner, we set up an extra window screen over our masonry heater and cut up apple slices (skins on) and laid them on the screen. In roughly twenty-four hours we had dried apple slices that pack a wonderful pop of succulent apple flavor when they sit in your mouth for a minute or two. They store nicely in a tightly covered glass jar if you can keep your hands out of it.

As the holidays approach and the company arrives, try this recipe for make ahead Apple French Toast. Put it together the night before and simply pop it in the oven in the morning, warming the house and filling the air with the scent of cinnamon and apples. This recipe works great for other fruits as well. Try it with peaches and/or blueberries when they are in season or from your freezer.

Apple Cinnamon French Toast

(Adapted from Connecticut's Dairy Promotion Recipe and printed in *Best Recipes of Berkshire Chefs* by Miriam Jacobs. Underlined ingredients are ours or local.)

¼ cup brown sugar
¼ cup butter
2 T. water
4 cups apples, peeled and sliced
1 tsp. cinnamon
6–8 slices of your favorite bread; we like Berkshire Mountain Bakery or homemade!
5 eggs
1½ cups Highlawn Farm milk
1 T. vanilla

In saucepan, heat brown sugar and butter until melted; add water, apples, and cinnamon; continue to cook until apples are slightly soft and sauce is foamy.

Pour mixture into a greased, 13 x 9 inch baking pan and let cool. Cover with bread slices. Combine eggs, milk, and vanilla; pour over bread. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Bake in preheated 350 degree oven 40 minutes uncovered (cover for last 15 minutes of baking time if bread is browning too quickly). Makes 8–10 servings.

Happy Holidays!

—Wendy G. Jensen
wendygj@gmail.com

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Recent Acquisitions at Monterey Library

Below is a sample of recent new material in the Monterey Library. Come in and browse! These books and movies are newly released and in high demand by all users of CWMARS. If you'd like to borrow them you will probably need to place a hold on them through your CWMARS account, or you can call the library (528-3795) or come by during open hours.

A list of new titles at the Monterey Library is now available online at the CWMARS site (http://www.cwmars.org/new_titles). Just click on Monterey Library (or any other library of interest) to see the recent arrivals.

DVD

Slow Fade (UNR)
He's Way More Famous than You (UNR)
Rising from Ashes (DOC)
For Love's Sake ((UNR FOR)
Eleventh Hour
Autumn Sonata (FOR)

Adult Fiction

Once We Were Brothers, Ronald H. Balson
The Joshua Stone, James Barney
Reply to a Letter from Helga, Birgisson Bergsveinn
Change at Jamaica, Marshall Messer
A Permanent Member of the Family, Russell Banks
Cross of Gold, Tim Champlin

Adult Nonfiction

The Backyard Birdsong Guide: Eastern and Central North America: a Guide to Listening, Donald E. Kroodsma

Audio Books

The Rosie Project, Graeme C. Simsion
The Tenth Witness, An Henri Poincare Mystery, Leonard J. Rosen
Nate the Great, *Collected Stories*, Vol.1, Marjorie Weinman Sharmat

Youth

The Boy Who Swam with Piranhas, David Almond
Mac King's Campfire Magic, Mac King
America's Paul Revere, Esther Forbes
Who Says Women Can't Be Doctors?: The Story of Elizabeth Blackwell, Tanya Lee Stone

Talks on Multicultural Diversity Dec. 6

On Friday, December 6, Beryl Jolly, Executive Director of Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, and Katherine Abbott, editor of the *Berkshires Week* section in the *Berkshire Eagle*, will share how they have been inspired to support diversity in their work. The event will take place at the Renaissance Arts Center, 420 Stockbridge Road, Great Barrington.

Beryl will share how she is invested in this work and how the Mahaiwe has maintained a long standing relationship of utilizing Multicultural BRIDGE as a resource for outreach, integration, and education within diverse communities. Beryl and BRIDGE will outline some of our collaborative projects coming up, including looking for sponsors for Lila Downs in March 2015 and preparing for our Berkshire Festival of Women Writers presentation at the Mahaiwe on March 10, 2014.

Katherine will tell the story of how the *Berkshire Eagle* and BRIDGE came together to create the column "On the BRIDGE." She will share how the project was born, how much she has learned from the evolution of the topics and writers, and what inspires her to continue this collaboration and feature these diverse perspectives.

The event and reception are being generously hosted and cosponsored by Renaissance Arts Center to raise awareness, engagement, and contributions for BRIDGE.

RSVP is encouraged as space is limited.

If you have any questions, please email adminsupport@multiculturalbridge.org, call 413-394-4029, or visit us online at http://www.multiculturalbridge.org/events.

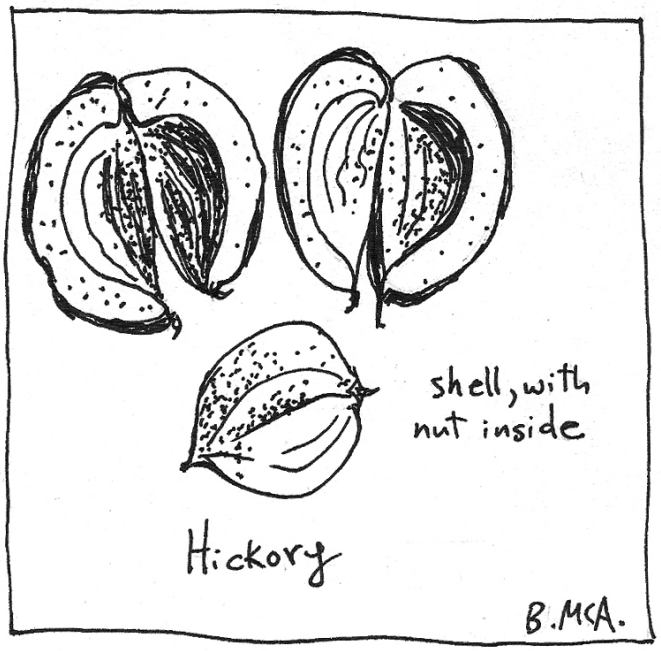
Cold Weather, Nuts, and the Backlog

The wind is up and we still go out, on our own two feet. We are looking down, now, to notice tracks in the snow and to beware of icy patches. Even driving the roads we keep an eye on the earth's surface, as it rolls out before us sheathed in pavement. Snow and icy patches at higher speeds, all the more need to look down, look down.

One day late last month the pavement on a certain parking lot was covered with nuts. We stopped, jumped out. Hickories! There are shagbark hickories in Monterey, certainly, but not around our place. Long ago a friend at Gould Farm offered us one if we wanted to dig it up and move it a few miles east here, but we haven't gotten to it, so nuts on the ground around home haven't yet included the hickories.

This nut-covered parking lot is by Holyoke Community College. We looked overhead and there was the tree, *Hicoria ovata*, up against the sky. Its branches, bare of leaves, were now peppered with dark balls. These are the nut hulls, and many had sprung open dropping small pale nuts to the ground. Other balls still held tight at the seams. On the ground were many hulls, some empty and some with nuts still in them just visible where the seams open. There were also many free nuts in their smooth, pale shells. All we could do that day was pocket a few and bring them home to our cracker.

This cracker is a lever-action floor model with ratchets and a tin guard for flying bits of shell. It has seen action every fall over the years here, but only on butternuts and black walnuts, which are big and rough. Putting the little hickories in the jaws of this cracker seemed a case of mechanical overkill. Still, you can be very gentle and precise no matter how big the machine. It's all in the design and the handling. The little nuts were so fresh and sweet we soon took another trip to Holyoke. This time we were looking up.



Last year in the fall I was looking up all the time wondering what happened to the white-pine cones. We use them for fire starters and it was the time to collect them. This year I am looking up, tuned to hickories, with the eye of a happy squirrel ready to stash for winter. When you look up in the treetops, spring or fall or anytime, you enter a world different from this one down here on the ground. It can hit you that some creatures live up there most of the time and think this is just normal: the light, the colors, the breeze, all changing all the time. Most of us folks don't get to spend the kind of time in the treetops we need to see these changes. Here is what happens up high, as told by Julia Ellen Rogers in 1905 (*The Tree Book*, Doubleday Page & Company, NY):

"Hickory flowers are not conspicuous in color or size, but the tree is a wonderful spectacle throughout the spring. First, the buds drop their two black outer scales, and the silky inner ones glisten like lighted tapers on every upturned twig. They grow in breadth and length as they loosen, and a cluster of leaves, small but perfect, and clothed in the softest velvet stand revealed. Then the great scales turn back like sepals of an iris, displaying coverings. The opening leaves, delicate in texture and coloring, may easily be mistaken for parts of a great flower.

"But the leaves soon declare themselves, and the scales fall. The tree is then draped in long chenille fringes of green. The wind shakes the pollen out of these

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staminate catkins, and the inconspicuous green nut flowers, clusters in the tips of leafy shoots, spread their stigmas wide to catch the vitalizing golden dust. The fringes now strew the grass under the tree; the bloom is past. Summer matures the crop of nuts.

"The first frost hastens the opening of the thick husks. The nuts fall, and schoolboys, who have marked the tree for their own weeks before, are on hand to bag the crop to the last sweet nut, if squirrels do not thwart them. In the open space in the barn loft alongside of the bin where pears are spread out to mellow, the nuts dry and sweeten. In the dead cold of winter evenings the story of 'Snow Bound,' in modern settings, perhaps, but still the same in spirit, will be re-enacted in farm homes in widely distant parts of the country. Nuts and apples and cider in the firelight!

"We have been setting fuel down as the last of a tree's uses. Naturally, burning is the end of things, and it is often an ignoble end. But fire is one of the great elemental forces in nature. A great conflagration is magnificent; a smoldering rubbish heap is not. Some kinds of wood sputter peevishly in burning. The most splendid wood fire is made of seasoned hickory. Wake up the old backlog, charred by half a hundred fires. Lay in the kindling and feed the growing flames at last with shagbark cordwood. There is no flame as brilliant as this; no wood burns with a more fervent heat. No wonder 'the great throat of the chimney laughs.' The passing of hickory wood in flames back to its primal elements is the fitting end of a noble tree."

—Bonner J. McAllester
(and Julia Ellen Rogers)

Wildlife Report: The Birds of November, Large and Small

Small birds are coming to the feeders. Sue Protheroe has been seeing juncos, goldfinches in subdued seasonal coloration, and fall warblers. Early in the month she also saw a pair of blue-winged teal on Lake Buel, the first she's seen there.

Up on East Mountain Steve Snyder saw a barred owl and a pileated woodpecker late in October. He also heard a ruffed grouse "drumming," or beating the air with its wings. There have been downy woodpeckers at Carol Ingher's feeder and she says they also have been pecking on the siding of her house. She must have a resonant type of siding, making a good drum, or else there is something to eat in there. Let's hope it is the former.

In the middle of the month, Kit Patten saw a Cooper's hawk gliding over the yard at his place on Fairview, accompanied by the alarm calls of the local vigilant blue jays. The blue jays are with us in good number this late fall, compared with last winter when most of us in Monterey saw few, if any.

Lake Buel folks are keeping a lookout for their bald eagles, and Kyle Pierce said that on November 20 she saw one eating a fish at the boat ramp. She thought someone must have left it there, but maybe the eagle grabbed it out of the lake. This eagle flew back and forth over the boat ramp area afterward, in what seemed like territorial behavior, letting all know this fish-table was spoken for.

Will Marsh has seen wild turkeys under his feeder, also a flock of several stopping traffic on River Road where he lives. And he saw a male ring-necked pheasant (handsome bird, says he) walking across the road at the Tyringham/South Lee line. Here on East Hupi something has been scuffing up the leaves by the sugarhouse, over a big area. We know this has been a great year for acorns, and often turkeys go gleaning for these. But this scuffing contained no turkey tracks in the light snow, so we are mystified. The scuffing came on Thanksgiving Day so it must have been Pilgrims, celebrating the bounty of the New World.

Thanks for all your wild sightings.

—Bonner McAllester
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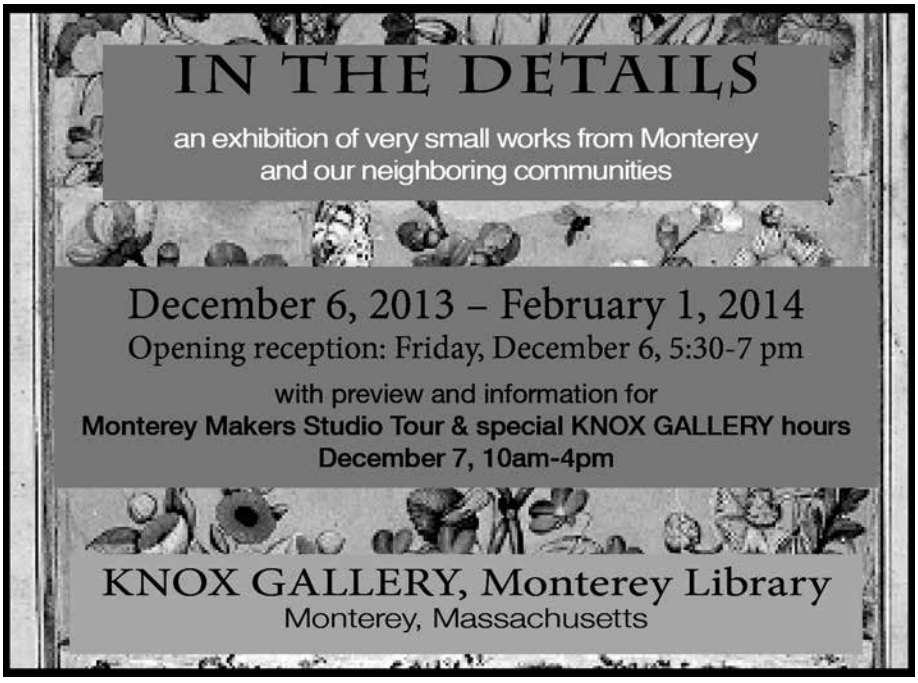
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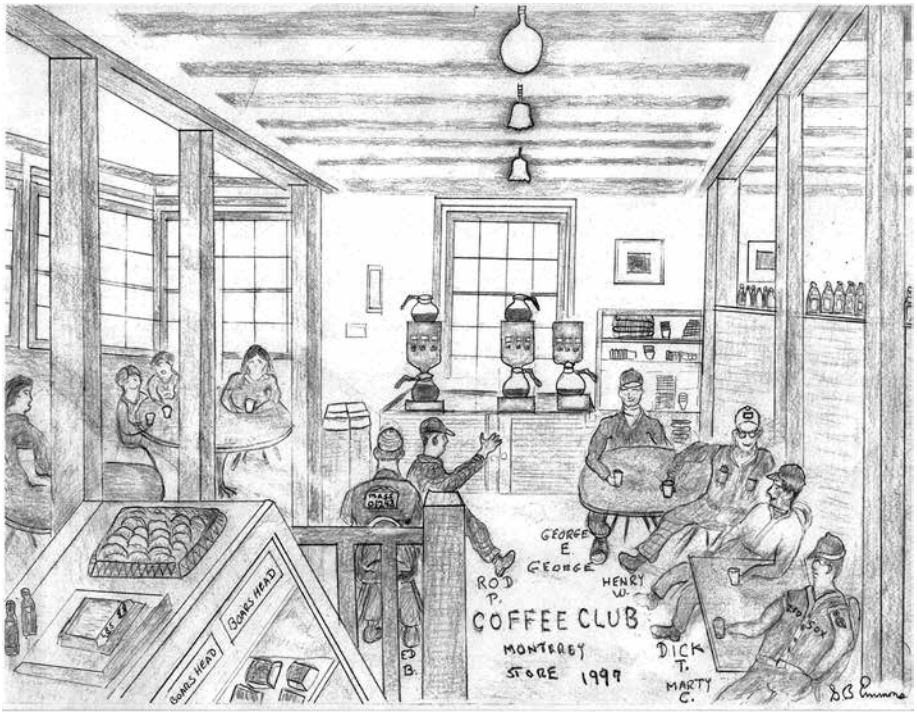
Monterey Coffee Club



At the *George Emmons, Art In Print* show last month, the most popular illustration from the *Monterey News* was my pencil drawing of the 1997 Coffee Club. Shown seated in the drawing, from the center clockwise, are early members Ed Briggs, Rod Palmer, George Emmons, Henry Wolfer, Dick Tryon, and Marty Clark. The title of my article was "The Cracker Barrel Bunch"—fitting for a gathering of good old boys in a small country store. The ambiance of this image was enhanced with a storefront decorated with antique wooden signs, advertising tin ware, linseed oil, hand-wrought nails, and licorice. Maynard Forbes was then proprietor, but long before he came the wooden barrels of coffee, cheese, and crackers, reminiscent of images in a Norman Rockwell covers for *The Saturday Evening Post*, had gone the way of the pot-bellied stove,.

The morning group that assembled daily for coffee brewing in pots at the back of the store was casual. Anyone walking through the door past the group was warmly welcomed for conversation about the weather and wildlife sightings or to grouse about taxes or comment on how the country was going to hell in a handbasket. Shorter visits were made by those going to work or town business such as appraiser Harry Gustafson or Fire Chief Ray Tryon. Others, like Steve Kahn, Len Simon, and David Cathcart, had time only for a drive-by appearance. And others were local Monterey family members by the name of Amstead, Makuc, Mielke, Heath, Thome, and Thorpe. Each spring brought summer residents Bill and John Maxwell, Bill Bell, Arnie Garber, Betsy Camp, and Peter Wolfe. Often their memories were humorous, about early days growing up with local youngsters, perhaps reminiscent of young impressions of life in Thornton Wilder's play *Our Town* about the same period in Grover's Comers, New Hampshire.

Tales of those who lived through the Great Depression, Prohibition, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, were told in detail, and their accumulation was a representative analogy to Tom Brokaw's subsequent best-selling book *The Greatest Generation*. At the turn of the twenty-first century, leaving that all to memory like the river behind the store rounding the bend, the Coffee Club also turned a corner, changing attendance to the church basement. The Monterey Store, built in the year 1780 and the second oldest in continuous operation in the country, was going through several changes in ownership. Today the church basement is still the meeting place every day between 8 and 10 a.m., except for breakfast at The Roadside Café on Thursday and at the General Store on Friday.

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Today the Coffee Club is a more diversified group, a country and cosmopolitan meeting of minds. We are currently headed by Steve Kahn as president, Dick Tryon as treasurer, Mike Storch as official photographer and raffle organizer, myself as coffee maker, with either Ray Coddington or Gerald Clarin as helpful volunteers. One very important custom remains that anyone walking in is always welcome to join in at any time. With a number of ladies now in attendance, there are currently no less than two dozen in the annual membership photograph on the basement wall, while nine members have been lost in the interim. The most recent loss was a first and foremost daily figure, Dean Amidon, who came every morning with Fran and often son Phil. The Coffee Club is donating another monument to Veteran's Park where Dean served as a Memorial Day Committee founder and presence all these years. The words will read as follows:

In Loving memory of
Dean P. Amidon
1924 – 2013
From His Friends at the Monterey Coffee Club

—George B. Emmons

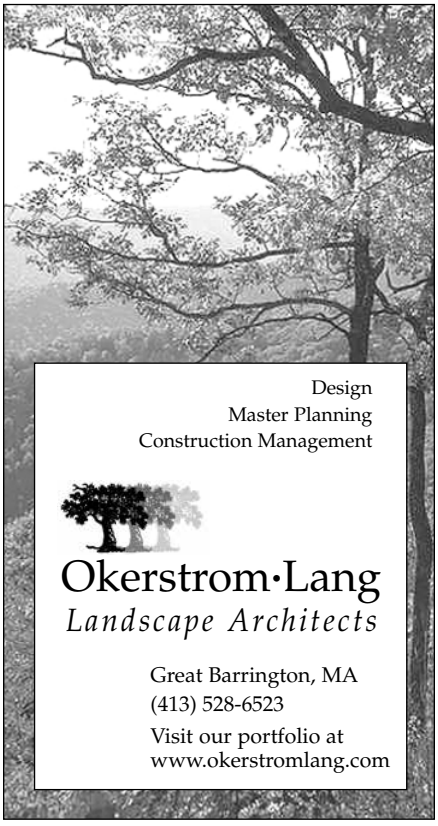
Alice and Richard Henriquez Fund Applications for Student Travel Due Feb. 1

The Alice and Richard Henriquez Fund/Youth World Awareness Program, a fund of Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, is accepting grant applications through February 1 from high school students and nonprofit organizations to support travel and humanitarian efforts in foreign countries by young people ages fourteen to twenty-two.

The Alice and Richard Henriquez Memorial Fund was formed in 1995 to encourage the development of peace among nations and justice for all people by funding international experiences for young men and women in their intellectually formative years. Mr. Henriquez believed that "an understanding of other people and their cultures, as well as sensitivity to the destabilizing effect of social and economic injustice is what young men and women will need if they are to effectively contribute to a peaceful and just world in their adult lives."

A committee of local residents reviews applications and awards grants ranging from $500 to $1500 based on whether the project will engage the applicant with a broad cross section of young people of other cultures and provide the opportunity to learn new customs and lifestyles, shows good planning, and contains an element of community service. The next deadline for The Alice and Richard Henriquez Fund/Youth World Awareness Program grant application is February 1, 2014. Applications and guidelines are available online at http://www.berkshiretaconic.org/SearchGrants.

To donate to the Alice and Richard Henriquez Fund/Youth World Awareness Program please go to www.berkshiretaconic.org/Donate or contact the Foundation at 413-299-0370.



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ANNOUNCING OUR NEW DIVISION: VACATION RENTALS

Monterey Walks from Julius Miner's Recollections (1940)

Part 14: Mount Hunger Road

Prepared by Barbara Swann for the Monterey Historical Society

Going east on the West Otis Road, we pass the Hupi Road on the left. The next road on the left is the Mount Hunger Road and is part of the old Boston and Albany Post Road. On this road, as we approach the first house, we see a foundation on the left. This was the site of a district school.

At times, there were forty pupils in attendance. The teacher received one dollar and a half per week plus her board. The parents alternated in providing the board. While the arrangement was hard upon the teacher, in some respects it did enable her to gain a marvelous insight into the problems of the individual children and their parents.

Note now, on the left, the small enclosure with its old stone wall. This was a town pound for stray sheep or cattle. The house on the right has the distinction of having been painted by more "artists" than any other house in town. Just beyond on the same side of the road are the remains of the cellar of another house. Walk into the driveway and look down the well.

Notice how beautifully the stones were laid. At the rear of the property is a little stream which once furnished power for a small rake-making industry.

The making of maple sugar was once an important part of town industry. The family at this location made in one season more than a ton of maple sugar. Two thousand pounds of maple sugar seems a large quantity, but when we consider that many families in many parts of the town were thus occupied, we better appreciate the size of the industry. Most of the sugar was marketed in the traditional cake form, but much of it was granulated for special uses. Some Monterey old-timers say that they used to stir the maple sugar dry in the pans and put it up in jars to sprinkle upon berries and fruit. One elderly lady sometimes treated friends to sample cookies of her own baking. They were deliciously made with sour cream and maple sugar and were seasoned with caraway seeds.

Opposite that cellar pit is the road to a cemetery nearby. Outside the stone wall of the cemetery is a strange hole. During and after the 1849 Gold Rush to California, stay-at-homes nearly everywhere searched for gold in their own neighborhoods. This was true here at Monterey. For some reason, certain youths suspected the presence of gold near this cemetery. They started digging, hoping to keep their adventure secret until they actually "struck gold." They struck no gold but the purpose of their excavation became known, and the other town boys made their lives miserable with ridicule and raucous laughter.

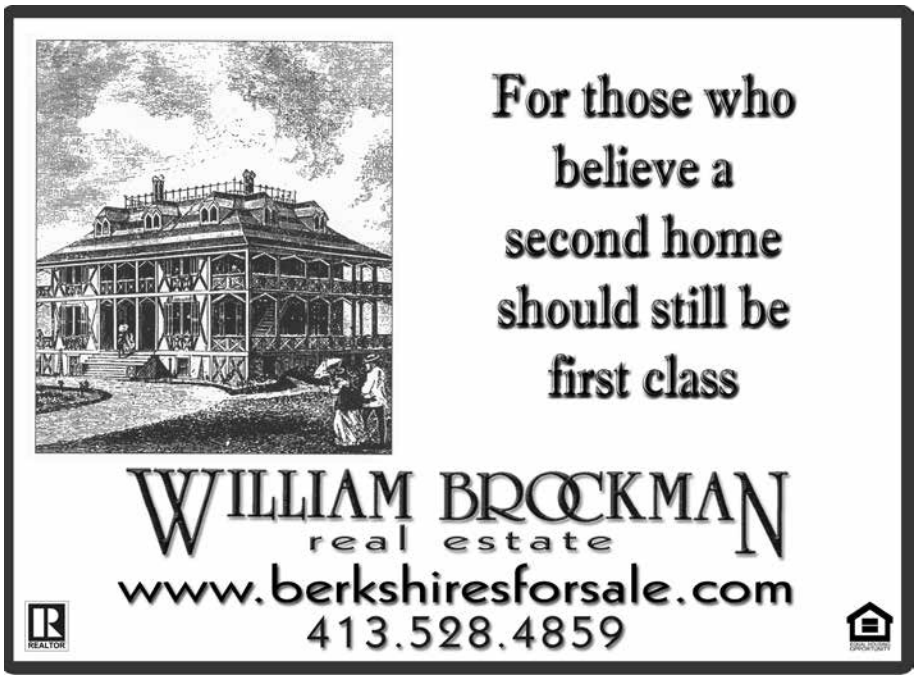
Stop at the next house and ask to see a large old fireplace and brick oven. Opposite is the summit of the Cobble. Inquire for the path to it and to an exceptionally interesting old stone wall in the woodland.

A real old-timer might explain to you that the stones at the base were laid in a concave ditch so that the stones would lean toward each other. Then, stones were placed lengthwise and crosswise so that the wall was tied each way. Also, if the wall ran east and west, it was tilted slightly toward the north. Thus, when the frost came out of the ground, since the sun shines more strongly on the south side, the, wall would not be tilted out of place.

Ascending the hill, note the large bed of myrtle and daylilies on the right. You will notice the many flat-faced stones scattered along the highway. Watch for a wood road on the right where there are more of these stones. Follow this road and you will soon see where these stones were quarried. It is an unusual sight. Notice the differing thicknesses of the layers. Look for markings on the stones resembling fossilized ferns.

Going down the hill, we see, on the left, the house where president James Abram Garfield frequently stayed with relatives while a student at Williams College. Ask to see the wood paneling and the "cat-head" apples [early English variety of lumpy or ribbed green apples grown for sauce] like those the President so enjoyed. He was reputed to be so strong that he could lift a full barrel of cider to his lips by its chines and drink from the bunghole.

Log pipes were used to convey water to the house from the spring on the hillside. There was a penstock near the door. Notice the stone wall near the brook and the size of its stones. On to the main road (the Tyringham Road) and we are one and a half miles from the village. We have just seen an interesting part of the old Boston and Albany Post Road. Stagecoaches and ox-carts frequently traveled this road. Look around all four corners for wild plums. They will be apricot in color. Back in 1850 they were said to be fast disappearing. Those hereabouts are among the very few surviving. We turn left here for the village center.



"When You're Smiling the Whole World Smiles with You"

You get the impression that "back then" people didn't smile very much. View "old" statues and paintings and see people rendered with serious looks on their faces (except perhaps for the Mona Lisa's subtle smile and the occasional "happy" peasants). When photography arrived in the mid-nineteenth century, nothing changed—all serious expressions, nary a smile to be found.

What might have been going on? Was "life" then a more serious and somber experience? After all, life expectancy was limited, disease prevalent, work exhausting, and insecurity constant. But, come on—there had to be lighter, happier moments in between. Of course statues and paintings were almost always executed for the elite and powerful. They were "serious" people with demanding responsibilities. Serious portrayals were needed to confirm that fact. But it also may be that artists found that depicting "smiles" was exceptionally challenging. The lips elongate. The face becomes disorderly, creases everywhere. Far easier it was to present a visage frozen, an undisturbed, continuous facial landscape. Maybe, though, it was all about the teeth. In reality, teeth were chipped, crooked, often missing—"dentistry" barely existed. A smile would reveal such imperfections.

Hunter Andrus

Just happy to be hanging out at Gould Farm

Then there is the early-photography explanation centered around the lengthy exposure times required before the subject could be captured. Better to look serious than to try to maintain a natural smile (no easy matter) for so long.

When smiles became the norm, indeed obligatory, in photography, and more significantly in social interaction, requires a bit of research. Surely it has something to do with the spread of cameras to the masses early in the twentieth century. Photos taken by just about anyone began to replace studio sessions. Formal shots remained but, increasingly candid, spontaneous photos appeared.

Surely, the most convincing explanation would come from an examination of cultural changes. When did the smile emerge as a shorthand sign of happiness, contentment, and an engaging personality? And why did it become so important to convey to others that you were both nonthreatening and cheerful?

Starting at birth, the smile is viewed as an essential milestone, a signal of sociability, a way of smoothing over rougher edges, and a reflection of inner contentment. Consider the effort that goes into making a baby smile. Assuming it's not gas, everyone around concludes that it is one happy baby with a bright future. And so it goes throughout our lives. As for photographs, it is the rare person who can resist ("smile for the camera") smiling. We've come a long way.

—Richard Skolnik

Richard blogs at www.catchmydrift.net.

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Letter from DC
Seva

It's the time of year when we get to reflect and give thanks for all the good things we appreciate in our lives. My yoga studio (more on this next month) has a theme for November: Seva. According to a 2003 article in *Yoga Magazine*, on one level Seva relates to service. But as a form of yoga, its essence can be found in the two words from which it is comprised *saha* and *eva*, meaning "with that" and "too" or *seva*—"together with." It is an expression of compassion and describes actions based on togetherness and integration that seek a collective upliftment through an understanding of the needs of others. Seva is a practice of purification or transformation, with the focus moving from body to mind and specifically to the components that we relate to our personalities and our identification with the world around us, such as culture, gender, education, and socialization, which are considered part of our artificial construct. In Seva yoga, you are asked, challenged perhaps, to do tasks that are not in line with your typical way of thinking or behaving.

It is those parts of our personalities that can be so hard to acknowledge, and to take in an image of ourselves and break down walls we may have put up that prevent us from practicing compassion can be even harder. In a busy city life with a million things to do and places to be, it is not easy to end up in this state of mind. However, this practice has been rewarding on a deeply personal level.

Here's one example. About a month ago, I was the target of a scam. The details aren't that important, and it wasn't a big deal; I didn't lose much money. But, I fell for it because I was trying to be generous and help a young woman in a grocery store parking lot whose story and situation sounded fairly convincing. I found out it was a scam, not because she never reimbursed me, but because she tried the same line on me two weeks later—I was almost amused. I feel as if I am somewhat memorable, but apparently she really does do this a lot. For me, the biggest issue was that my attempt to be generous, with money, ended up with this result. So, I was faced with two choices: I could be hurt and angry with both the person and myself, or I could try to dig a little deeper into that pool of generosity and practice compassion toward both of us. I recognized a need within myself for compassion and understanding, so I have chosen to go that route, but if I ever see her again, this decision will definitely be tested.

Here's a slightly different example from the week before Thanksgiving. I went from a workshop focusing on Seva to run some errands, including checking the air in my tires for my trip home. The older woman in front of me was moving a bit slowly, and the guy behind me (only in a city do you have a line for air) eventually got out of his car and just stood there, so I opened my car door and leaned out to see what he wanted. He made some fairly asinine comment along the lines of how long does it take to put air in your tires? I just shrugged, unimpressed, said I didn't know, and closed my door.

But then, I was faced with a dilemma. I did not want to rush and I did not want him sitting in line behind me, making me feel rushed. So I started up the car, drove out of the line and pulled back in behind him. He then filled up his two tires and I really thought he wasn't going to acknowledge me at all (and given his attitude, I wouldn't have been surprised), but then he touched his hand to the brim of his baseball cap and nodded his head at me. It was a brief connection between strangers in a situation that could have been left to fester.

I ended up not having enough change

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on me, so I went back a few days later, and as I was fiddling with the hose and the pressure gauge a random man walked up with a tire he needed to put air in and offered to help. I protested a bit, as I consider myself to be capable, but he was insistent and made quick work of double checking the pressure. I am honestly a bit surprised by how putting positive energy out into the world really does seem to be paying off, either internally or with my interactions with others.

The yoga studio is also highlighting the importance of Seva this month because it pertains to service, sharing, and gratitude. In addition to providing me with an opportunity to grow personally, it has created a space in my busy life to really practice gratitude and to recognize communities around me and the importance of being in service to each other. I was home over Columbus Day weekend, for the first time since last Christmas, for Rawson Brook Farm's thirtieth anniversary celebration. The preparations had been taking place for months, and the morning brightened into a stunning fall day in New England. There were amazing food entries, celebratory sips, and reminiscing all around. Many folks had been eating Monterey Chevre since well before I was born and just as many are extended farm family. The community came out to celebrate this milestone event for the family business, a place I'm so proud to call my home.

Reflecting back on the many hugs and quick but meaningful conversations, I am struck by gratitude for the individuals in the Berkshire community that are such an integral part of my life. And I am grateful to my mom for opening up her home as a place for customers to visit where they can come to gain an insider's knowledge of how their food is made and connect to the entire process from start to finish. They develop this connection with the farm itself, and they bring their children, who then return years later with their children. Visiting the farm becomes a family tradition. When I think back on the celebration, I remember the sense of togetherness: the connections, the relationships, the uplifting nature of the farm community. I appreciate my mom's example of giving to the community and creating such a special place for folks to return to again and again.

I hope everyone had a healthy Thanksgiving filled with gratitude and community, and I wish you all a wonderful month of December as we close out 2013.

—Tarsi Dunlop

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CATA Offers Creative Stocking Stuffers

Community Access to the Arts (CATA) provides hundreds of visual arts workshops to artists with disabilities in Berkshire County. The fruit of these workshops is framed and exhibited in museums, cafes, and community spaces throughout the year. Many works of art are reproduced for note cards and other merchandise distributed by CATAdirect, the organization's crafts cooperative, where artists earn commission on items sold.

CATA's newest products—mini notebooks and calendars—are just perfect for stocking stuffers, according to Anamyn Allen, CATAdirect studio manager. Other small but memorable gifts include colorful, ceramic tile magnets, silver or gold hexnut bracelets, and bright luggage tags designed to help you easily distinguish your bags from the hundreds of other on the airline carousel.

"CATA is a great place to find unique gifts for people," says Betsy Andrus, Executive Director of the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce. "Many people don't know there is a little boutique in the CATA offices at 40 Railroad Street (second floor)."

CATA products are also sold in retail stores such as One Mercantile, Berkshire Co-op, LOCAL, Berkshire Museum Shop, 413 Glassworks, and online at www.communityaccesstothearts.org

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From the Meetinghouse . . .
A Legacy of Valor

December is a time for looking back over the year, so I moseyed a little distance through my 2013 calendar in reverse. I found myself stopped at a memory created in October.

I had been one of the many of us who waited willingly in line at the calling hours for Dean Amidon. I'd spoken to Fran, to Peter and Mary Alice, the three Amidons I know in addition to Dean. So, with a full plate for the next day, I felt sad, but also felt no need to be present at his funeral. On that busy afternoon I was driving toward Great Barrington when I saw a dark car with its lights on crest over Butternut hill. That car was followed by another, and another, and another. Blindsided by awareness—*They're bringing Dean's body home for burial!*—I pulled over to the side of Route 23 and cried.

I call that the last gift Dean Amidon gave me: the gift of tears. You see, I'm not 'a crier.' I'm one of those folks who express deep feeling with a slight moistening of my eyes, not salt water running down my face. Or, at least, I was. We'll see. Tears cleanse the soul, they say, and like everyone else around here, I get by with a little help from my friends.

And, yes, there's a third quote coming: What Barack Obama once said of those fallen in battle—which I also used in my Memorial Day speech in 2012, referring to the World War II vets who came home to live with us for a longer period of time—is also true of my small experience of Dean's life. So I'll adapt the President's words, using the third person singular.

Mary Kate Jordan

Dean Amidon, Veterans Memorial Park, Memorial Day 2013

He was an ordinary citizen who rolled back the creeping tide of tyranny, who stood post through a long twilight struggle, who saw terror and extremism threaten our world's security and said, "I'll go." And though his story is unique to the challenges he faced, our fallen service member is forever bound by a legacy of valor older than the Republic itself.

A legacy of valor. Words his town and family inherited by example during Dean's life, and words for all of us to navigate by, as he did.

December. A time of opening to the light within, of necessity. We start the month aiming toward, and then we pass, the midpoint of the six months of near-total darkness at the poles and the easier, though still challenging, cold days and nights in Monterey.

As I write this in early November, a friend who lives in Anchorage reports no snow there yet, but plenty of cold and palpable darkness. In moments when the light in my own heart seems dim, I remind myself of how well her sons were prepared for adulthood because they grew up in the rigors of Alaska (as well as within the embrace of their family home).

The opportunity to live, and leave, a legacy of valor wears many faces. Some of those faces wear smiles. Smiles rather like Dean Amidon's. Why not pass some of your smiles along, too, during this season of sharing the inner light with the world outside?

—Mary Kate Jordan

ॐ

Contributors

Many thanks to the following folks for their recent contributions to support our community newspaper.

Maurice Mandel,
in memory of Dean Amidon
Eileen Clawson
Carol Husten
Nancy Fliesler
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Calendar

Every Monday except holidays: Select Board meeting, Town Hall, 9 a.m.

Through December 14: Exhibition of recent painting by Joe Baker, Sandisfield Arts Center. For hours or to make appointment, call Joe, 413-528-9385.

Tuesdays, December 3, 10, 17: Chair Yoga with Connie Wilson, 9–10 a.m., Monterey Town Hall. Free.

Friday, December 6:

Special Town Meeting, 7 p.m., Monterey Firehouse. See p. 1.

Opening reception for *In the Details*, an exhibition of small works by local artists in various materials, 5:30–7 p.m., Knox Gallery, Monterey Library. Exhibit runs through February 1. See p. 3.

Saturday, December 7: Fifth Annual Monterey Makers Studio Tour of artists' and artisans' studios in Monterey, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. See p. 9.

Wednesday, December 18: Community Potluck Dinner, 6 p.m., Monterey Meetinghouse Fellowship Hall. Jim Bracken will read his story "Spaghetti with Beans." Everyone welcome; see p. 3.

Monday, December 23: Select Board meeting cancelled.

Saturday December 21: Lenox Holiday Contradance and Potluck. Live music by Arigana Highway, Calling by Nils Fredland; afternoon dance 5–7, potluck to 8, more dancing to 11:30. Bring a dish to share for potluck, Lenox Community Center, 65 Walker St, www.lenoxcontradance.org, contact: 413-528-4007.

Wednesday, December 25: Christmas Day, Town Hall, Library closed.

Monday, December 30: Adult book group will discuss *The Bookseller of Kabul* by Asne Seierstad, 7:30 p.m., Monterey Library. Newcomers welcome.

Wednesday, January 1: New Year's Day, Town Hall, Library closed.

Monterey News

The Monterey News is an independent nonprofit corporation dedicated to fostering communication in the Monterey community. Our editorial address is PO Box 9, Monterey, MA, 01245. We invite signed letters, articles, drawings, poetry, and photographs. Submissions may also be sent to the email address below. Address requests for advertising rates and further information to the Editor, or telephone us at 413-528-4347 or email montereynews9@gmail.com.

The Observer
October 26 – November 25

High temp. (11/18)	58º
Low temp. (11/24)	11°
Avg. high temp.	46.1°
Avg. low temp.	26.4°
Avg. temp.	36.3°
Total precipitation (rain and melted snow)	1.71 in.
Snowfall	1.8 in.

Precipitation occurred on 8 days.

Useful Town Phone Numbers

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Tax Collector's Office: 528-1443 x117
(for questions about your tax bill)
Town Clerk: 528-1443 x113
(for marriage licenses, death & birth certificates, census, dog licenses)
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Fire Department (non-emergency): 528-3136
Highway Department: 528-1734
Executive Secretary: 528-1443 x111
(for Board of Health, Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and other misc. questions)
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Contributions from local artists this month:
Pat Arnow, 9; Maureen Banner, 5; George Emmons, 16; Tristian Goik, 21, 22; Bonner McAllester, 14

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